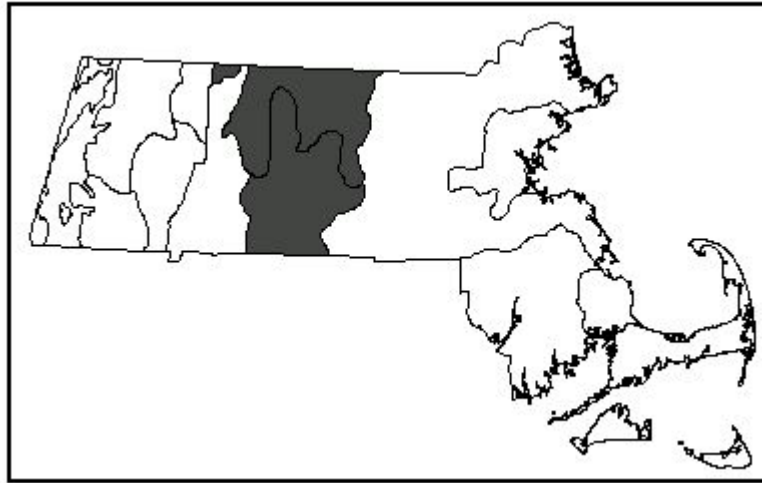


**Community Name:** BLACK GUM SWAMP  
**Community ELCODE:** CP1B2A0000  
**SRANK:** S2



- Concept:** Forested acidic basin swamps with accumulations of peat. Black gum is a dominant canopy tree, often with red maple.
- Environmental setting:** Black gum swamps are forested hummocky peatlands that occur in poorly-drained basins. There can be small areas of seepage, usually at the edges of the basin, where seepage indicator plants such as black ash and bugleweed, occur. pH is strongly acidic and ranges from 3-5. More information is needed.
- Vegetation Description:** Black gum swamps have pronounced hummock-hollow topography, and woody vegetation is confined to the hummocks. The canopy is open, often in the 25-50% cover range. Black gum (*Nyssa sylvatica*) dominates the canopy, but red maple (*Acer rubrum*) and Eastern hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*) are also abundant. Yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*), white pine (*Pinus strobus*), red spruce (*Picea rubens*), and black ash (*Fraxinus nigra*) may also be common. The shrub layer is well-developed; typical species include common winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), smooth winterberry (*Ilex laevigata*), mountain-laurel (*Kalmia latifolia*), common mountain-holly (*Nemopanthus mucronatus*), highbush blueberry (*Vaccinium corymbosum*), and wild raisin (*Viburnum nudum* var. *cassinoides*). Herbaceous species occur on the hummocks and include cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*), beggar-ticks (*Bidens frondosa*), goldthread (*Coptis trifolia* ssp. *groenlandica*), northern water-horehound (*Lycopus uniflorus*), swamp-dewberry (*Rubus hispidus*), marsh St. John's-wort (*Triadenum virginicum*), and Massachusetts fern (*Thelypteris simulata*). Wet hollows are typically lined with sedges including silvery bog-sedge (*Carex canescens* ssp. *arctiformis*), bladder-sedge (*Carex intumescens*), tussock-sedge (*Carex stricta*), and three-seeded bog sedge (*Carex trisperma*).
- Associations:** No associations have been described in Massachusetts.
- Habitat values for Associated Fauna:** Black gum swamps can function as vernal pool habitat if water remains standing for 2-3 months and they lack fish; these areas provide important amphibian breeding habitat.
- Associated rare plants:**
- Associated rare animals:**
- |                 |                |    |
|-----------------|----------------|----|
| CLEMMYS GUTTATA | SPOTTED TURTLE | SC |
|-----------------|----------------|----|
- Examples with Public Access:** Satan's Kingdom WMA, Northfield.
- Threats:** Hydrologic alterations threaten black gum swamps. Selective logging of trees other than black gum may have allowed the relative abundance of black gum to increase. More information is needed.
- Management needs:** More information is needed to assess the management needs for black gum swamps.

Natural Heritage & Endangered Species Program, Massachusetts Division of Fisheries & Wildlife

**Synonyms**

**USNVC/TNC:** Acer rubrum-Nyssa sylvatica-Betula alleghaniensis/Sphagnum spp. Forest [CEGL006014].

**MA [old name]:** Southern New England basin swamp, black gum association [CP2B2A1B00]; Southern New England acidic seepage swamp, black gum swamp [CP3B2A1B00].

**ME:** Not described.

**VT:** Red maple-black gum swamp.

**NH:** Black gum-red maple basin swamp.

**NY:** Not described in Reschke. Newly described: Red maple - black gum swamp.

**CT:** Acer rubrum-Nyssa sylvatica / Clethra alnifolia community.

**RI:** Not described.

**Golet & Larson, 1974:** Deciduous wooded swamp (WS-1).

**Other:**

**Author:** J. Kearsley **Date:** 7/21/99